

**STEPHEN TIMMS ANNOUNCES NATIONAL WINNER OF
E-COMMERCE AWARDS 2003**

**Response Maintenance and Building Services Ltd wins £40,000 in DTI backed
Awards**

9 October 2003: Wolverhampton based building contractors, Response Maintenance and Building Services Ltd, has been named the national winner of the fifth anniversary InterForum E-Commerce Awards 2003 backed by the DTI's UK online for business, for its innovative use of internet, information and communication technologies in helping to transform its business .

Response Maintenance and Building Services Ltd (www.response-maintenance.co.uk), whose use of mobile and wireless technologies has enabled it to transform itself from a traditional manual labour business, improving job management and supply delivery to its mobile workforce, also won the Best Use of Mobile and Wireless Technology innovation category at the event and beat an incredible 2,944 other small and medium sized organisations from across the UK (a 75% increase on last year) to the title of National E-Commerce Awards Winner 2003 to win the grand cash prize of £30,000.

Stephen Timms, Minister of State for Energy, E-Commerce and Postal Services presented Andrew Cornaby, managing director of Response Maintenance and Building Services Ltd, with the cheque at an awards ceremony held at The Grosvenor House Hotel in London on 8 October 2003, also attended by national sponsors Royal Bank of Scotland Group and Cisco Systems.

Stephen Timms commented, "The UK has developed one of the best e-commerce environments in the world, and is ready to exploit the developing benefits that technology offers."

"But we must keep improving our use of ICT if we are to become world leaders in e-business. We can do this by ensuring the quality of advice businesses get is second to none and making sure we have the right skills to use the technology."

"Today's winners are an outstanding showcase of the UK's e-business capabilities. All of the participating organisations are excellent examples of why the UK is amongst the best in the world. But they are also role models who can encourage other businesses, local communities and professional bodies to take up the challenge and reap the benefits that e-business has to offer."

As well as four national category winners, four new innovation category winners were selected from 44 regional finalists. Having all received £2,000 at the regional heats, the national winners won a further £8,000 at the national final. The 2003 national category winners are:

- **E-Business Start-Ups:** Mothersbliss.com
This site was created 30 months ago when its founder was expecting her first baby and found there were no websites that met her needs for information, advice - and all the unfamiliar products she needed to buy! It has grown into an excellent source of all of these things and has obviously struck a chord with young mothers and mothers-to-be, with revenues growing at a rate of 10-15% per month.
- **E-Trading:** Dabs.com
This company began as a publisher of technology books 16 years ago and soon moved into mail order of IT and technology products. Having tested the water with online sales, the founder took a courageous step. Telephone and postal orders were no longer accepted. He was staking everything on ecommerce. His gamble paid off. Sales have tripled from £50m to £151m over the past five years and profits have increased fifteen-fold over the same period.
- **E-Business:** Caldwells Group
This winner is an old company that looks after the entire supply chain for engineering goods on behalf of other companies: sourcing, paperwork, procurement and payment. It has built up a fair bit of experience in the field: In fact, it has been providing these services since 1893! Caldwells Group has used a well-judged investment in e-business to completely re-invent itself.
- **Voluntary & Community Sector:** The Pentalk Network
This winner comes from a setting that few people associate with ecommerce - a rural community in the North West. It was born during the foot and mouth crisis when farmers were under great pressure and very isolated. With invaluable funding from the DfES and the Rural Recovery and Farmers Fund it has since evolved into a resource used not just by farmers and their families but also other members of the regional community and other

farmers from as far away as Zimbabwe and the Falkland Islands with maps, information, weather reports and information about buying and selling.

Introduced this year to mark the fifth anniversary of the E-Commerce Awards, the new innovation categories highlight the maturing use of e-technology and winners are:

- **Use of Mobile & Wireless Technology:** Response Maintenance and Building Services Ltd
- **Use of Broadband Technology:** Signposts at Tyne Tees Television
The winner of the National Broadband Communications Innovation Award for 2003 provided an outstanding demonstration of how innovative use of Broadband technology can level the playing field for all citizens, reinforcing the importance of removing the Digital Divide. This service shows how streamed content can create social and economic inclusion for Deaf people, and offers the educational potential to form a bridge between the hearing and non-hearing communities.
- **Advanced Supply Chain Integration:** IMS Ltd
The winner of the National Advanced Supply Chain Integration Innovation Award for 2003 developed outstanding solutions to address the needs of their employees, agents and their customers, delivering immediate access to the status and details of projects. They have created a powerful, real-time marketing tool that has enabled them to build a business on an innovative operational model. They have considered the needs of their field workers in detail, in order to provide a flexible and empowering working environment.
- **Best use of Technology Means Business (TMB) advice:** Hideaway Country Holidays Limited
The winner of the National Use of Technology Means Business Accredited Advice Innovation Award for 2003 showed outstanding foresight in bringing together an ASP-based integrated property management system and the head-office-based accounting system via a satellite link to a remote delivery location. These innovative services have greatly saved staff time and improved customer experience without introducing local administration overheads. The in-depth knowledge provided by the advisor and their ability to act as a technical go-between ensured a successful delivery of the solution.

Response Maintenance and Building Services Ltd was awarded the overall title of National E-Commerce Awards winner 2003 for its implementation and use of field service technology, including PDA devices and always-on GPRS. The application has enabled the company to achieve cost and productivity improvements, an estimated 12 month Return on Investment, and the competitive edge of improved customer responsiveness.

Operating within a sector with generally a poor market perception, the judges felt that Response Maintenance and Building Services Ltd showed great foresight in transforming many aspects of the business processes, delivering efficiencies in productivity, stock control as well as improving customer experience, to create a 21st Century business. They believe this will provide a great example of best practice to many small organisations of how new mobile internet technologies can improve costs, productivity and customer responsiveness.

Phil Flaxton, Chief Executive of InterForum, said "Over the last five years, the Awards have recognised more than 6,000 small and medium sized UK businesses for their application of internet, information and communication technologies. The maturity and sophistication of the entries has also increased over the years and highlight the benefits that new technology can bring such as greater market penetration, increased customer response, lower costs, and closer relationships with suppliers and customers.

"Our congratulations go to all winners, and in particular to Response Maintenance and Building Services Ltd, who has demonstrated just how an innovative use of technology can help to completely transform a business."

The E-Commerce Awards are open to any organisation with less than 250 employees and recognise and reward innovation in the application of Internet and information and communication technologies to transform small and medium sized businesses in the UK.

Further information about this year's Awards, sponsored nationally by the Royal Bank of Scotland Group and Cisco Systems, and details on how to pre-register or nominate a company free of charge for next year can be found on the dedicated web site www.ecommerce-awards.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

1. UK online for business

UK online for business is a partnership between Government and industry and promotes the use of e-business amongst small and medium sized businesses. There is a network of UK online for business advisers situated in the Business Links in England and their equivalents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These advisers provide down to earth, practical and impartial advice to individual businesses on how technology can cut time and cost from the way they do business. For further information call 0845 715 2000 or visit www.ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk

2. www.interforum.org is a not-for-profit organisation that helps British companies to conduct their business electronically. All of InterForum's activities are governed by the need to raise awareness of the many business opportunities and challenges presented by new Internet, information and communications technologies. InterForum works to ensure that education, legislation and technology are in place to help British businesses to profit from the digital economy. For further information on InterForum please visit its website <http://www.interforum.org>

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